



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Investigates Cases of Shigellosis in Rolette County *Good Hand Washing Practices Recommended*

ROLETTE COUNTY, N.D. – Four laboratory-confirmed cases of shigellosis were reported from Rolette County in July 2006, according to Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist for the North Dakota Department of Health. Of those, two were hospitalized. Two additional cases are pending laboratory confirmation. All cases are children younger than 18. At this time, no common source for these infections has been found.

Shigella sonnei, the bacteria that causes shigellosis, are shed in the stools of infected people, both in those showing symptoms and those not appearing to be ill. The bacteria are spread by eating or drinking contaminated water or by direct or indirect contact with fecal material from an infected person. Ingestion of only a small amount of bacteria is required to cause infection; therefore, the bacteria can spread easily from person to person.

Most people who have shigellosis develop diarrhea, fever and stomach cramps starting a day or two after they are exposed to the bacteria. The diarrhea may be bloody. A person with any of these symptoms should seek medical care. Appropriate antibiotic use can shorten both the duration of symptoms and the length of time the bacteria are found in stools.

Groups at increased risk of shigellosis include children in child-care centers and people in institutions where personal hygiene is difficult to maintain, elderly people, those with suppressed immune systems, health-care workers and people in homes with inadequate water for hand washing.

To prevent the spread of shigellosis:

- Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers and before preparing food or beverages.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

- Dispose of soiled diapers properly in a closed-lid garbage can.
- Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them.
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child-care settings.
- Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
- Do not prepare food for others if you experience diarrhea or vomiting.
- Avoid drinking water from lakes or swimming pools.

If diagnosed with shigellosis, health-care workers, food handlers, and children and staff of day-care centers should stay home until diarrhea has ceased and two consecutive stool cultures test negative for the bacteria.

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger or Julie Goplin, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378. To report a possible infection, call 800.472.2180. A fact sheet about shigellosis is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease.

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